

EWP Success: Y-12's Job Package Improvement Process"

Dramatic improvements in the quality of planning and work packages have been realized as a result of the Facility Maintenance Organization's (FMO) "Job Package Improvement Process". Instituted for all maintenance planning activities across the Y-12 plant, the process is helping those involved with preparing job packages continually improve the quality of their work and reduce mistakes.

As a result of the Job Package Improvement Process, more than a ten fold decrease in job package technical and administrative errors/omissions has been documented in 1997. The overall improvements in the work packages have resulted in jobs being completed with fewer "eleventh hour" delays, better worker awareness of safety and technical issues for the work at hand, and increased job documentation and feedback.

The process entails a detailed review by each supervisory Planning Specialist of at least one job package per week prepared by those planners in his or her group. As there are currently about sixty Y-12 FMO planners assigned to one of six specialty groups (e.g., "carpentry", "electricity/electronics", etc.), about six packages per week are chosen for detailed review. This constitutes about 6% of the 100 or so "fully planned" job packages produced per week at Y-12. In addition, at the Planning Specialist's option, reviews may also include packages prepared to less rigorous "skill of the craft" or "minor maintenance" criteria. Reviews can take place either before or after the work is actually performed.

The detailed reviews are performed using a check sheet which solicits responses to about 30 key questions about the quality of the job package. Examples of questions include: "Are all necessary forms and signatures included?"; "Is the job scope clearly identified in the work instructions?"; "Are material requirements and locations clearly identified?"; "Do all pages in package add value?"; "Has the job been adequately reviewed for safety hazards?", etc. When the Planning Specialist determines a package to be lacking, points are assigned for each apparent deficiency and feedback is given to the planner within one day. Discussions are held between the planner and planning specialist to ensure concerns are understood and valid as well as to identify what can be done to minimize future problems and, in general, how the planning process could be improved. Points are tracked anonymously by the FMO manager in the spirit of measuring overall trends and improvements rather than pin-pointing individual fault.

By establishing: 1) clear criteria for a planner's success, 2) the process for frequently evaluating progress towards a goal of "zero deficiencies", and 3) prompt feedback mechanisms which allow planners to both learn from mistakes and help improve the overall planning and evaluation process, dramatic results have been achieved. Over a seven month period in 1997, reductions from an average of 1.2 errors/package to 0.1 errors/package have been observed in the maintenance planning group at Enriched Uranium Operations. For all six FMO planning groups, the errors per package has been reduced from an average of 4.5 to 0.6.

Sharing techniques for improving work control processes is a primary goal of Enhanced Work

Planning at Oak Ridge and at other DOE sites around the nation. If you are interested in receiving copies of the job package evaluation forms or other details about this process, please contact Frank Fitzpatrick (pager: 1-800-374-4434; ext. 13091; e-mail: fgfitz@aol.com).